

Chairwomen Osten and Walker, Ranking Members Berthel and Nuccio, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Patricia Sobraske and I'm a resident of Bloomfield.

I am testifying today in opposition to Governor Lamont's proposed budget (H.B. 6659). It is quite obvious there are serious, structural racial and economic disparities between different school districts across our state. The last few years have made it clearer than ever that not every student is given the resources they need in order to succeed academically and professionally.

There are currently \$700 million economic and racial funding gaps between Connecticut's economically disadvantaged and majority-BIPOC districts and wealthy majority-white districts. This is frankly unacceptable. A student's race or their family's socioeconomic status should absolutely not dictate the quality of education they receive. These characteristics are no fault of their own and have such a severe effect on their outcomes, both academically and in their future careers.

All of Connecticut's students deserve to be funded based on what they need to be successful. I want our students to ALWAYS have access to counseling services, be able to study and learn in a building that has enough ventilation, and to never have to adjust to their teacher leaving midway through the year due to the undue stress that chronic underfunding has created.

It is imperative that we do everything we can to support our students, teachers, and communities, and that starts with funding all students fully and equitably. This is why I wholeheartedly urge you to reject Governor Lamont's proposed budget and instead focus on passing H.B. 5003, which would implement a student-centered funding model that will alleviate the racial and economic funding gaps for ALL students and communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Patricia Sobraske
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